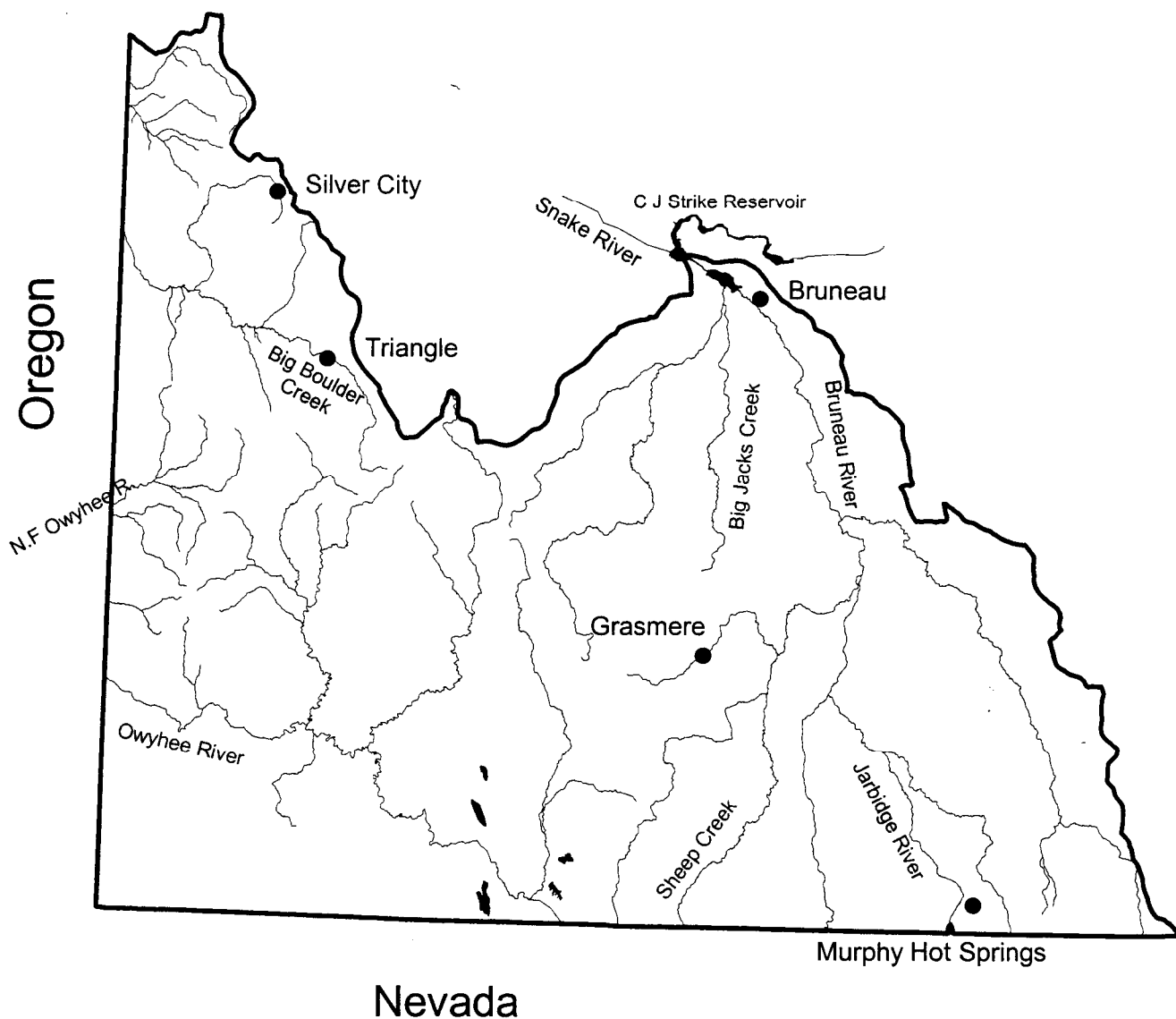


Owyhee River Drainage

Bruneau River Drainage



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21. OWYHEE RIVER DRAINAGE, BRUNEAU RIVER DRAINAGE, AND MINOR TRIBUTARIES SOUTH OF SNAKE RIVER

A. Overview

The Owyhee River and Bruneau River basins lie in southwestern Idaho, southeastern Oregon and northern Nevada. This basin encompasses approximately 11,340 square miles of semi-arid high desert country, of which about 8,000 square miles lies within Idaho. In the higher bench lands of the Bruneau and Owyhee, the rivers and their tributaries flow through deeply incised canyons. Elevations in the Owyhee drainage range from 8,100' in the Owyhee Mountains to 2,400 feet at the Snake River. The Owyhee River has an annual average discharge of 661,500 acre-feet of water at the Oregon/Idaho border. Elevations in the Bruneau drainage range from over 10,000 feet in the Jarbidge Mountains to 2,455 feet at the mouth. The Bruneau River has an annual average discharge of 292,000 acre-feet of water.

Most of the Owyhee River drainage contains populations of redband trout. Due to the unique qualities of this fish and the inaccessibility of the Owyhee drainage, this entire drainage will be managed for racial preservation. Lahontan cutthroat trout have been introduced into several reservoirs near Riddle.

No cutthroat trout are present in the Bruneau River drainage. A remnant population of bull trout exists in the Jarbidge River. Populations of native redband trout exist in many tributaries. Redband trout are widely distributed, however, some local populations have been severely affected by land management activities and drought.

From the mouth of the Bruneau River upstream to the hot springs, the water quality is not suitable to support coldwater species. Significant angling pressure occurs on the more accessible streams of the Bruneau River drainage, but pressure is extremely light on most of the relatively inaccessible streams. The Jarbidge River downstream from the confluence of the East Fork and West Fork, and the Bruneau River are utilized for float trips.

The Bruneau River, West Fork, lower East Fork, lower Sheep Creek, and Jarbidge River have been recommended for National Wild Rivers status.

Livestock grazing on some tributary streams has impacted fish habitat, and efforts should be made to work with landowners and land management agencies to improve habitat.

B. Objectives and Programs

1. Objective: Manage stream and reservoir fisheries to preserve the genetic integrity of native desert redband trout.

Program: Stock other species of fish only in reservoirs that will not pose a threat to preserving redbands and use only sterile rainbow trout.

Program: Restock streams with depleted populations where habitat conditions have been restored with redbands by collecting fish or eggs from adjacent areas that contain native redband trout.

2. Objective: Work cooperatively with state and federal land management agencies and grazing permittees to improve riparian and aquatic habitats.

Program: Establish riparian vegetation objectives in management plans that annually provide 80% of the potential, riparian vegetation mass to be in place prior to high flows occurring.

Program: Monitor stations on major tributaries of the Owyhee and Bruneau river systems to determine trends in riparian conditions, aquatic habitat, and fish production.

3. Objective: Increase reservoir fishing opportunities.

Program: Seek opportunities to construct new fishing reservoirs in cooperation with federal, state, and private landowners.

Program: Seek cooperative agreements with private landowners to gain access to existing reservoirs.

Program: Restock reservoirs with appropriate stocks of fish when drought conditions cause fish kills or de-watering.

Program: Renovate reservoirs with rough fish populations that limit the fishery.

4. Objective: Maintain and improve bull trout populations in the Jarbidge River drainage.

Program: Maintain no harvest rules for bull trout on river and tributaries.

Program: Support effort by state and federal agencies to remove man-made migration barriers.

Program: Encourage state and federal agencies to improve riparian habitat, especially on the plateau streams.

Program: Provide information to public on presence, how to identify and how to release bull trout.

Drainage: OWYHEE RIVER					
Water	Miles/acre	Fishery			Management Direction
		Type	Species Present	Management	
Owyhee River (downstream of the South Fork) including tributaries	239/	Mixed	Smallmouth bass Redband trout	Wild	Evaluate current growth, size and age structure, and exploitation. Maintain wild redband populations.
North Fork Owyhee River, including tributaries	61/	Coldwater	Redband trout	Wild	Maintain wild redband populations.
South Fork Owyhee River, including tributaries	95/	Mixed	Smallmouth bass Redband trout	Wild	Evaluate current growth, size and age structure, and exploitation. Maintain wild redband populations. Work with Nevada Department Wildlife to avoid stocking trout that pose a threat to the future of redband trout.
Owyhee River (South Fork to Nevada state line), including tributaries (except Deep Creek, Battle Creek, and Blue Creek	12/	Mixed	Smallmouth bass Redband trout	Wild	Evaluate current growth, size and age structure, and exploitation. Maintain wild redband trout populations.
Deep Creek, including tributaries	142/	Coldwater	Redband trout	Wild	Evaluate current growth, size and age structure, and exploitation. Maintain wild redband trout populations.
Battle Creek, including tributaries	103/	Coldwater	Redband trout	Wild	Evaluate current growth, size and age structure, and exploitation. Maintain wild redband trout populations.
Blue Creek, including tributaries	139/	Coldwater	Redband trout Cutthroat trout	Wild	Investigate feasibility of treating drainage above reservoir to eliminate pikeminnows.
Blue Creek Reservoir	/131	Coldwater	Redband trout	General	Stock with redband trout following low water years. Manage for preservation of redband trout from Blue Creek Reservoir upstream. Sample periodically.
Little Blue Creek Reservoir	/188	Coldwater	Cutthroat trout	General	Stock annually with Lake Lenore strain of Lahontan cutthroat trout fingerlings. Sample periodically.
Grasmere Reservoir	/213	Coldwater	Redband trout Cutthroat trout	General	Stock annually with Lake Lenore strain of Lahontan cutthroat trout fingerlings. Sample periodically.
Shoofly Reservoir	/85	Coldwater	Cutthroat trout	General	Stock annually with Lake Lenore strain of Lahontan cutthroat trout fingerlings. Sample periodically.
Bybee Reservoir	/70	Coldwater	Cutthroat trout	General	Stock annually with Lake Lenore strain of Lahontan cutthroat trout fingerlings. Sample periodically.
Payne Creek Reservoir	/55	Coldwater	Cutthroat trout	General	Stock annually with Lahontan cutthroat trout. Sample periodically.

Drainage: BRUNEAU RIVER					
Water	Miles/acre	Fishery			Management Direction
		Type	Species Present	Management	
Bruneau River (mouth to upper diversion dam)	10/	Warmwater	Smallmouth bass Channel catfish Rainbow trout	General	Manage for smallmouth bass and channel catfish fishery. Study water temperatures. Spring and fall movement of rainbow trout from CJ Strike Reservoir creates short-term fishery.
Bruneau River from upper diversion dam to West Fork, including tributaries (except below)	314/	Coldwater	Redband trout Mountain whitefish	Wild	Manage for redband trout and bull trout. Access limited by deeply incised canyon. Work with BLM and private land owners to improve riparian habitat
			Bull trout	Conservation	Closed to harvest.
East Fork Bruneau River (Clover Creek) and tributaries	165/	Coldwater	Redband trout Brook trout Mountain whitefish	Wild	Maintain wild trout populations and investigate status of bull trout. Work to improve riparian habitats.
			Bull trout	Conservation	Closed to harvest.
Blackstone Reservoir	/85	Coldwater	Redband trout Sterile rainbow trout	General	Maintain wild redband trout populations and stock sterile hatchery rainbow trout.
Sheep Creek (including Mary's Creek)	143/	Coldwater	Redband	Wild	Maintain existing populations of redband trout.
West Fork Bruneau River and tributaries	103/	Coldwater	Redband trout Mountain whitefish	Wild	Manage for native redband trout and bull trout and work with Nevada Fish and Game to eliminate stocking of trout that would threaten future of redband trout. Evaluate current growth, size and age structure, and exploitation. Evaluate potential response to special regulations and public desire for quality management. If appropriate, impose quality regulation.
			Bull trout	Conservation	Closed to harvest.
Jarbidge River and tributaries	87/	Coldwater	Redband trout Mountain whitefish	Wild	Maintain wild populations of native trout. Monitor bull trout population to evaluate recovery. Catch rate of 1.0 fish/hour.
			Bull trout	Conservation	Closed to harvest.